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PASS TO USTR, USDA/FAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/08/2017

TAGS: EAGR ECON ETRD EUN PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL ON OCTOBER 10 BIOTECH VOTE

REF: STATE 140452

Classified By: Pol/Econ Off Jenifer Neidhart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)  
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(C) On October 9, Pol/EconOff delivered reftel points to Isabel Sarmento from the Ministry of Agriculture, urging Portugal to vote favorably at the October 10 EU Regulatory Committee. Sarmento stated that Portugal would not block the three biotech corn votes or the one biotech potato vote, but neither would it commit to voting in favor. A close Embassy contact and Portuguese biotech expert elaborated further on Agriculture Minister Jaime Silva's voting instructions. He reported in confidence that Portugal plans to vote favorably only if there is a qualified majority. If there is no qualified majority, Portugal plans to abstain. Our Embassy contact does not expect that a qualified majority will be reached. (Note: While not a member of government, we have found our contact to be the most accurate indicator of Portugal's biotech voting.)

Hoffman